LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving at least one ACH transaction by a computer system executing a payroll ACH service from a one of a payroll vendor and for a client of the payroll vendor, the payroll ACH service provided by a payroll ACH service provider that is separate from the payroll vendor;

verifying the at least one ACH transaction by the payroll ACH service of the payroll ACH service provider, the verifying including error checking of the at least one ACH transaction by the computer system;

executing the at least one ACH transaction by the payroll ACH service of the payroll ACH service provider; and

limiting financial risk by providing balancing information and control of the ACH transaction execution to the payroll vendor through the payroll ACH service of the payroll ACH service provider.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein limiting financial risk includes requiring a direct debit procedure.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one ACH transaction is received in a single batch from the client.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

forecasting available funds for an account.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 4 further comprising:

establishing predetermined types of investment objectives.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 4 further comprising:

    investing available funds based on forecasted availability.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    accumulating tax payment data for off site back up.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the verification of the at least one ACH transaction includes comparing year to date transaction data.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    assuming by the payroll <u>ACH</u> service provider of liability for non sufficient fund returned items on behalf of the payroll vendor.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    notifying the client regarding one of negative and positive tax balances.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    testing files for one of an additional client and missing client.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    verifying one of an additional employee and an additional bank account.

13.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

    placing available funds in a trust management system.

14.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

    using a double entry accounting system in processing transactions.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

contracting directly with the client by the service provider.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

allowing the client to use a federal reserve bank account number of the service provider.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

testing files for duplicate client batches for a payroll check date.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

separating a set of charges between the payroll vendor and the client.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein all ACH transactions are received in a single file per client from the vendor and a single debit is generated.

20. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a file containing ACH related data from a payroll vendor or for a client of the payroll vendor;

checking the ACH related data in the file for erroneous data;

determining a risk management scheme for the ACH related data to protect the payroll vendor by a computer system of the payroll ACH service provider, the risk management scheme including a balance check for the ACH related data of the client and a control interface to view error and balance data and to execute corresponding ACH transactions; and

processing the ACH related data by [[a]] the payroll ACH service of the payroll ACH service provider according to the risk management scheme, the payroll ACH service provider being separate from the payroll vendor.

21.   (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising:

verifying the ACH related data against prior transaction history data.

22.   (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising:

checking the ACH related data for one of an additional client and a missing client.